Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BONN 03595 280601Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-02
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-15 MCT-01 HA-05 TRSE-00 SY-05 EB-08 USSS-00
FAA-00 DOTE-00 CTME-00 /101 W
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R 271920Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6237
INFO AMEMBASSY NICOSIA
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PEPR, CY, EG, WG
SUBJECT: KYPRIANOU INTERVIEW ON EGYPTIAN RAID AT
LARNACA AIRPORT

REFS: (A) NICOSIA 0486; (B) NICOSIA 0495

1. THE FEBRUARY 27 EDITION OF THE GERMAN WEEKLY DER SPIEGEL CARRIES AN INTERVIEW WITH CYPRIOT PRESIDENT KYPRIANOU ON THE EGYPTIAN RAID AT LARNACA AIRPORT. SIGNIFICANT ASPECTS OF THE INTERVIEW ARE SUMMARIZED BELOW:

2. KYPRIANOU SAID HE TELEPHONED SADAT ON SUNDAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 19, INFORMED HIM THE HIJACKED PLANE WAS RETURNING TO CYPRUS AND SAID HE WOULD PERSONALLY WORK TOWARD THE FREEING OF THE HOSTAGES AND THE
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PAGE 02 BONN 03595 280601Z

CAPTURE OF THE TERRORISTS. SADAT, SAID KYPRIANOU, "EXPRESSED HIS GRATITUDE IN A MANNER WHICH I INTERPRETED TO MEAN THAT HE WAS LEAVING IT UP TO ME TO SETTLE THINGS." CONTINUING, KYPRIANOU SAID HE TOLD SADAT HE WOULD HANDLE THINGS "A LA CARTE BLANCHE."

3. KYPRIANOU SAID THE GOC MADE A VERY SHARP PROTEST

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

TO THE EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR AFTER DETERMING THAT THE C-130 CONTAINED EGYPTIAN COMMANDOS. THE AMBASSADOR RESPONDED THAT THERE WAS NO NEED FOR ALARM SINCE THE COMMANDOS WOULD NOT ATTACK THE PLANE WITHOUT THE CONCURRENCE OF THE GOC. THE GOC THEN WARNED THE AMBASSADOR THAT IT WOULD BE VIEWED AS A HOSTILE ACT IF A SINGLE EGYPTIAN SOLDIER LEFT THE PLANE. DESPITE THIS, THE COMMANDOS ATTACKED THE PLANE AS CYPRIOT POLICE WERE APPROACHING IT TO IMPLEMENT THE AGREEMENT WITH THE TERRORISTS. KYPRIANOU SAID THE EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR AND THE MILITARY ATTACHE HAD ALREADY BEEN INFORMED THAT AN AGREEMENT WITH THE TERRORISTS HAD BEEN REACHED.

4. KYPRIANOU STATED THAT THE AGREEMENT SPECIFIED: THAT THE HOSTAGES AND CREW WERE TO BE RELEASED; THE TERRORISTS WERE TO HAND OVER THEIR WEAPONS; AND THE GOC WAS THEN TO DETERMINE WHAT SHOULD BE DONE WITH THEM. KYPRIANOU DENIED THAT THE TERRORISTS HAD BEEN ISSUED CYPRIOT PASSPORTS. HE SAID THE GOC HAD TOLD THE TERRORISTS IT WOULD DECIDE THE PASSPORT QUESTION AS WELL AS THEIR FATE "IN AGREEMENT WITH THEM AFTER THEY HAD SURRENDERED THEIR WEAPONS. THE CYPRIOT PRESIDENT ASSERTED THAT THE GOC "HAD NO INTENTION OF MAKING IT EASY FOR THE TERRORISTS TO DEPART CYPRUS, REGARDLESS OF THEIR DESTINATION."

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5. AT THE REQUEST OF THE TERRORISTS, THE GOC HAD CONTACTED ALGERIA, LIBYA AND SOUTH YEMEN REGARDING LANDING PERMISSION FOR THE HIJACKED AIRCRAFT. ALL THREE HAD DECLINED TO GRANT AUTHORIZATION. SYRIA HAD AGREED TO PERMIT THE PLANE TO LAND BUT THE TERRORISTS HAD NO DESIRE TO GO THERE.

6. KYPRIANOU SAID THE GOC WOULD HAVE UNDERTAKEN A MILITARY OPERATION AGAINST THE PLANE IF THE NEGOTIATIONS HAD FAILED.
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Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

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US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
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